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A PERIODICAL OF REFORMED COMMENT AND OPINION

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THE GREAT LIGHT OF GOD

*Calvin Seerveld*

A WELL-APPOINTED CHURCH MUSIC *Howard Slenk*

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*with a Response by H. Evan Runner*



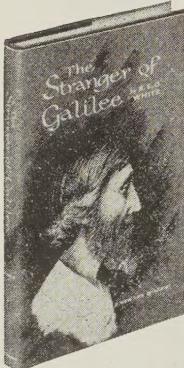
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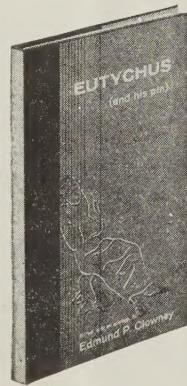
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**The  
Reformed Journal**  
A PERIODICAL OF REFORMED COMMENT & OPINION

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## In This Issue

CALVIN SEERVELD, teacher of philosophy at the new Trinity Christian College, writes about the unearthly fierce light of Christmas that Isaiah saw long ago. This light still shines in our semi-darkened land, and we too can see it — unless we have forgotten the terror of sin.

HOWARD SLENK, on leave from Calvin College to study music at Ohio State University, offers very constructive criticism and advice on the quality and use of music in our churches. The piece should prove especially helpful to all those who have a hand in the music of our worship.

EDITOR JAMES DAANE continues his discussion of God's election by analyzing another distortion of this Biblical doctrine. His concern is to show that the man in Christ can know his election in faith just as in faith he knows Christ. If we are sometimes haunted by the possibility that in the hidden will of God we have been rejected, we must look at, and listen to, Christ.

JOHN CALVIN REID, a new contributor to these pages, gives an imaginative account of what Mark might have said if someone had asked him why he wrote his gospel. Dr. Reid has followed both the Scriptures and the findings of New Testament scholarship in writing this account. In future issues of the *Journal* we hope to place the personal accounts of Matthew, Luke, and John.

NICHOLAS WOLTERSTORFF gives a critical evaluation of one possible answer to the difficult question of what kind of connection there is between the Bible and the several areas of learning. H. Evan runner then responds to this criticism and carries the discussion forward by explaining his own position and asking his critic some pertinent questions. These two pieces are, we know, rather long and certainly not easy reading for anyone who does not have some knowledge of philosophy. Perhaps not many readers will follow the arguments employed. But we hope that those readers who must, and want to, concern themselves with Christian higher education, will find this exchange helpful in formulating their own view of a highly important matter.

# As We See It

## RESPONSE TO CHRISTMAS

THERE IS A WARMTH about Christmas that penetrates deep into our hearts. Good friends are most dear, families most knit together, casual acquaintance mellow, and even the stranger seems less strange. Songs are in the air, greetings are hearty. The stars tremble in ecstasies, and the angelic choirs almost break through the sable skies again.

It is Christmas! The gladsome time. We greet men as brothers and our hearts embrace the world. Together we go, children of every region and nation on the beaten path to the manger. We remember who first went that way: Magi and shepherds drawn to one stable, kneeling in one simplicity, worshipping one Child. Learned and practical wisdoms joined hands in one obeisance, bestowing their fruits in one place, sharing one King. To the unlettered were the angels revealed, and to the erudite the natural performed supernatural service. By revelation they were drawn one to the other; and having been joined in one consecration they returned to their ways praising God.

So be it with us!

Hard upon the Christmas season opens the New Year. Can we keep the warmth of the one as we enter upon the other? Shall we return from the Child's crib with praises on our lips, only to become no more than we were before? Or may it be that by kneeling together, praying together, adoring together we have been knit one to the other in ways which *this* New Year may establish as never quite before? Ways which shall be established because, like Magi and shepherds, we go onward with songs of praise forever on our lips?

The New Year opens into a new decade. This decade challenges the Church of the Child as rarely or never before. How shall we meet this challenge? Shall we not do so as we have knelt at the manger, *together*? Having been to *one* place, having knelt before *one* King, having offered our gifts to *one* Lord, shall we not as *one* people march together into 1961? Each proferring those talents he has been given to *one* Kingdom with *one* song of praise on his lips?

Has it been said that there may be 'parties' among us? Who shall say so if we are united in praise to *one* Lord!

Has it been observed that there are differences of view and of emphasis among us? These can, in praise, be transmuted into gateways to further, deeper, clearer understanding of each other; to broader, richer service of the *one* Truth to which we all are equally committed.

Might it be that there are old scars, hidden wounds? None too deep for myrrh to heal if offered in praise with ourselves to *one* service!

\* \* \* \*

It is Christmas.

We sing together. We approach by way of angel or by way of star one manger together. We kneel before *one* Lord together, and clasping His hand we clasp each other's. We depart with *one* praise welling up out of our hearts . . . together. We go our separate ways . . . still *together*!

Having shared all this, having offered ourselves to all this, shall we not share henceforth more and more *in each other*?

Time grows short. History moves with accelerating speed. We need all of our talents, all of our energies, all of our contributions for our real adversaries and our real opportunities. Not lest the tasks of God remain undone, but lest He offer the doing of these tasks to others.

\* \* \* \*

It is New Year's Day.

What a New Year 1961 may be, if we highly resolve to enter upon it in the warmth and unity of Christmas. Let us so pledge while the echoes of the carols still ring in the distance. Let us keep alive in our hearts the voice of praise; united in this, we must draw together ever closer in all else.

\* \* \* \*

Who has set aside for another season, always reluctantly, Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" without echoing that final wish,

"And it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us. Amen."

-L.D.K.

## AFTERMATH

It was the second day after Election Day. By this time all of America knew that Vice-President Nixon had conceded Senator Kennedy's election as President of the United States. I had taken my car to the service garage for emergency repair (no connection with the election). The proprietor, a Catholic, a superb mechanic, and a fine gentleman, was quiet, and a bit glum. The election, he confessed, had not gone his way.

He was trying to make a phone call, but the line was dead. He went to the phone of a neighboring business establishment, and came back with a report that all lines in the area were out and service would not be restored until late afternoon. "Cappy," a lanky, gaunt, beady-eyed mechanic, with a voice as sharp and flat as a fog-horn, barked: "Wa-a-a-lll, whadda ya expect. Look 't what happened yestiddy."

After a little while the door of the service station opened, and a short, stocky man, of about retirement age, entered. Written across the grey complexion of his deep-lined face were grief, anger, weariness, dissipation. He sat down heavily in a chair, and with obvious reference to the President-elect, exploded with a bitter curse and wished for his death.

These are, perhaps, typical of the reactions of American people who have experienced defeat in a political contest. There is the quiet disappointment of one who accepts the verdict and in the knowledge of his duty picks up his tools and goes to work. There is the jibe of the citizen who makes caricature of his own and others' fears and finds relief for his fury in the jest. And there is the passion-driven spirit who finds his will crossed and surrenders to the hate complex that destroys his usefulness as a man and a citizen.

One wonders, at times, whether in our last election the spirit of the latter has not become unduly prominent and come to expression even in a context of refinement and religious commitment. To the evil of the Democrat, in whom some find the spectres of a "welfare state" and a "pink trend," there is added the horror of a Roman Catholic and the ogres of Medieval Inquisition and the power pressures of an Almighty Church. And in characteristic

revulsion there comes back into modern times a renewed medieval urge to holy war.

John F. Kennedy has been chosen to be President-elect of the United States. In the fashion of the great American concession to Presidential prominence, Kennedy was featured as going to church on the first Sunday after his election. This usually warms the hearts of the American people. It is heartening for them to know that the Chief Executive of these United States recognizes God, is concerned to worship, and is humble enough to kneel in prayer. But it has been a bit disheartening to some to find the President-elect going to a Roman Catholic Church.

A United States President kneeling at a Roman Catholic Mass — this is a new legend. It will take a big adjustment for many Americans to hold their President in affection and respect for his religious devotion when the pattern of his worship stands under the prejudice of being Roman Catholic. But we have made adjustments in other instances when Presidential worship patterns were humanistic, liberal, or of non-descript Protestant character; or haven't we! Have our political preferences determined our attitude toward presidential religious behavior?

But perhaps the matter of largest concern will be not the President's private religion, but the influence of his Catholicism on public practice. Now that the campaign is ended and the "religious issue" has been exploited to the maximum, it is possible that fears of papal domination of American government will go into moth balls until 1964. Perhaps it is true that no one seriously expects the Vatican to run the White House, or will find any good ground for the simple assumption that medieval power politics will be reproduced in a modern American democracy. If, however, the President is governed in his public life by his religious convictions, would one seriously desire it otherwise? Or should it be proposed that he keep his conscience for the chapel?

When Vice-President Nixon conceded victory to Senator John Kennedy, the tears rolled down big from the eyes of my little daughter. She found great consolation, however, in the words of the same man who made acknowledgment of defeat. When Richard Nixon asserted his faith in the unity of the American people, and called for all to stand with their new leader, grief gave way to new hope and resolution. Defeat is hard to swallow. But if we are indeed "one nation under God," our prayers must be for the one chosen to lead us "under God."

Christians will pray for, and work with — not against — their new President.

-G. S.



The Editors and Publisher of the JOURNAL take this occasion to express the wish and prayer that all spiritual blessings in our Lord Jesus Christ may be yours in this hallowed season and in the days of the coming year.



# The Great Light of God

by Calvin Seerveld

ISAIAH was a man of God who dreamed dreams and prophesied. One of the prophetic dreams God gave him is this one, as he recounts it.

*The people wandering around in darkness see a great light!  
A light shines down upon them, those living in the Land of the Shadows of Death!  
(You made folk multiply, Lord, but you did not make them very happy.)*

But now, a light is shining down upon them —

*They shout in your face for joy as people shout at the harvest time or as people roister about when they share in the booty of war, for the yoke weighing them down, the heavy yoke upon their shoulders, and the threatening club of their taskmaster*

*You have broken to pieces — like that day with the Midianites. . . .*

*There is tumult:*

*All their boots of war pulled on in battle alarm, and all their blood-smeared fighting clothes are being burned, thrown into a fire which licks them up.*

Now — what is it? there is a child . . .

*A child is born for us, a son, a male child is given to us; and the office of Command is put upon his shoulders.*

*The name of the child is: Miraculous Wisdom, Almighty God, Father of Time, Lord of Perfection! And so that he may build up and make strong the throne of David, that is, his Kingdom, with law and justice, his power of Command and saving Peace shall undergo no end but continue from that time on into eternity.*

As this sudden prophetic revelation by God to Isaiah ends, Isaiah adds:

*The jealousy of God, Lord of the angels, will see to it that this is fulfilled.*

Exactly what did Isaiah behold here?

That people groping about in semi-darkened land, a wasteland of captivity where they are oppressed by evil lords as if they be animals, yoked — that these people suddenly see a powerful, bright light that signals freedom! And they joyfully go wild, almost blinded by the strong light, ripping off their shoes, tearing off their bloody prisoner clothes, and throwing them all into one huge bonfire (which purifies because it consumes).

And then the unearthly fierce light in the dream illuminates the new Conqueror — what's that, Isaiah almost says — a child? The awful voice of Je-

hovah God answers: Yes, this child is my only-begotten Son whose surname is Miraculous Wisdom, Almighty God, Father of Time, Lord of Perfection; and his Kingdom of Law and Justice, Power and Peace, once openly begun shall grow wonderfully, a Light raised up in the wilderness to release men from bondage, a Power to redeem the wasted world. Amen and Amen.

GOD ALMIGHTY fulfilled this prophecy once upon a time long ago during the days of the despotic Roman Empire.

A band of insignificant Jewish sheepherders were among the first to be swallowed up in this strong angelic light. It swept them off their feet so that they threw down their work and hurried off in a commotion to go see — the child! And when they saw him, they celebrated riotously, telling everybody all about it! They probably were not very intellectually precise on what it was all about, but that is the way it is with victory: We've won! The King of Kings has come! We're free! Praise Jehovah from whom all blessings flow! There was a great light! The Messiah is here! Glory be to God in the highest!

Far off somewhere in heathen lands this strange compelling light Isaiah talks about was seen too. In the frightening pagan land of taboos, shadows of death, certain wisemen — strange philosophers after the order of Job and Melchizedek? — were captivated by the Light of the world and set out foolhardily almost like Abraham from Ur to find the Promised Land — God knows where — to find the child! And when they found him, they were beside themselves with joy (says Scripture). They took out everything they had, gold and frankincense and myrrh and treasures in superabundance, falling down upon the ground to worship him, the King of the Jews!

OUR COMING CELEBRATION of the Word's becoming flesh — if it follows the pattern of traditional American Christian commemoration — will not correspond to the Oriental enthusiasm, almost intoxicated adoration and thanksgiving, which Isaiah depicts. Our perfunctory praise and informed explanation shall seem much more like the bearing of the Scribes and Pharisees, sedate in Jerusalem, quoting chapter and verse of the event but untouched by the Light, unmoved by the holy Light which makes strange believers run like fools to Bethlehem and get down on their knees before the child.

Perhaps we church people have lost the stagger-

ing feeling of victory, rescue, liberation, because we have forgotten the terror and hopelessness of sin. To be bound by sin is to live like a captive animal, a beast of burden, heavily laden, driven by the Evil One, yoked and beaten, waiting for an end to it all and a new beginning which never comes, laboring lonely through the valley of the shadows of death. Unless this reality, to which we all stay prone — being beasts of burdens — unless this condition our celebration, the celebration cannot be Isaiah's way but must be an extra-Scriptural one.

THAT THIS WHOLE AFFAIR centers about "the child" is not a matter of embarrassment. Those who say, Isn't Christianity ever going to grow up? Do you always have to come back to that baby?, and others who make the birth "a nativity scene," an occasion for sentiment and a gush of semi-mystical Tolstoian feeling — these observers do not see the hard apocalyptic Light which Isaiah reports, and they do not know the child's last name, Almighty God. This child deserves to be feared, for someday — and this is the outreach of Isaiah's prophetic dream — some terrible day when the sun will have turned

black and the moon will have gone out and the stars will have fallen, in that day when it shall truly be dark, a great brilliant Light shall pierce the darkness and that child raised to glory as Lord of the angels shall come in Power and Justice to complete permanently the victory already begun when Quirinius was governor of Syria. At that day some shall shout in his face for Joy at the prospect of Glory, and the others who have not followed the Light to where the young child lay shall be cast into everlasting fire by the jealous God of heaven and earth.

*Father in heaven,  
We pray for the advent perspective;  
We pray, teach us to rejoice greatly, exuber-  
antly;  
We pray, convict us and comfort us with the  
message of Isaiah before the Light of  
the World shall come again.  
In the name of  
Miraculous Wisdom,  
Almighty God,  
Father of Time,  
Lord of Perfection,  
we pray,  
Amen.*

## A Well-Appointed Church Music

by Howard Slenk

The phrase that serves as the title of this article originated with the most gifted church musician in the history of Protestantism — Johann Sebastian Bach. In 1730 he addressed a letter to his consistory at Leipzig, suggesting improvements for the music in the local church. In this letter Bach is very detailed and practical. He does not state principles or ask for basic changes in the worship service. This was not necessary, for Bach lived in an age when Protestant church music was on its highest pinnacle. The Lutheran church was making full use of her Reformation heritage. The role of the worshiper was an active one. The congregations sang the great Lutheran chorales. The choirs performed great works composed expressly for each service.

The same cannot be said for our age. An examination of Protestant church music today necessitates a much deeper criticism than that written by Bach two centuries ago. By no stretch of the imagination can it be said that church music today holds a lofty position. A valid criticism would have to formulate principles, ask for changes, and offer detailed and practical suggestions.

These three prerequisites must give this essay its design if it is to offer a valid critique of our church music. I shall undertake to examine some basic principles of worship and the manifestations of these principles in the details of the worship service; to examine music that manifests or violates these principles; and to offer suggestions for placing into our services music that enhances rather than violates worship.

### I. THE PRINCIPLES OF WORSHIP

A discussion of worship principles may well be based upon the address of our Lord to the Samaritan woman. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth." There are four words in this text which are seeds from which our principles can sprout: *They, Him, Spirit, Truth.*

*They*

Plural pronouns occur frequently in Scriptural references to prayer and worship. "They that worship" is one. The first word of the Lord's Prayer is another. These words imply that worship is essentially the activity of a person who is also a member of a group; they imply the activity of a living organism, the Body of Christ. Sermons, prayers, and hymns can be heard at home on the radio on

\*The substance of this essay will appear in Mr. Slenk's forthcoming guide to worship services that are musically and textually unified. The book is entitled *A Well-Appointed Church Music*, and will be published by the Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. early 1961. \$1.50.

Sunday, and we might hear better ones than we would in our own church. But worship is not mere personal spiritual profit. It is not a monologue, not even a dialogue; it is a drama, the drama of the communion of saints, the Body of Christ met to honor the Head of the Body. And like good drama there must be no over-acting, no redundant lines, no obtrusive stage props, no participants who are not lost in the total action.

This relationship between individual and group in worship was one of the underlying principles of the reforms of Calvin and Luther. The great aim of the Reformation was to restore the worship service to the people. This is what we call our Reformation heritage, and its glory is the active participation of all worshipers. Our standing to sing the hymns, our recitations of creeds and prayers, our posture itself, should be contributions of individuals forming a spiritual complex. All separate acts of worship are events subdued to the total action, yet also making their own essential contribution to the life of the whole. We are neglecting our heritage when we see the church service as the responsibility of the minister. We are neglecting our own priesthood as believers.

### *Him*

The importance of the individual worshiper does have a danger inherent in it. It is possible to focus too much attention on the human element, stressing the "They" instead of the "Him." True worship glorifies not itself or the worshiper but the One worshiped. Perhaps you believe that the main function of the worship service is to provide you with a helpful sermon for the week. It is true, of course, that God does things for you in worship, but it is also true that putting the emphasis on getting instead of giving may rob you of an opportunity to intensify your praise of God and your knowledge of self-insufficiency. You will be doubly disappointed. Not only do you have a mistaken, egocentric view of worship, but for you many worship services will be a failure: poor sermons confront us almost as often as poor church music. Looking at worship as an hour during which one is prayed for, preached at, and sung to, is an easy mistake to make, and not always the fault of the minister or choir. The American mind is being entertained in new ways every day. In this golden age of entertainment and organized leisure, it is indeed difficult to remember that in church, things must be done *BY* us, as well as *FOR* us.

In church music more than any other facet of worship, the idea of entertainment or performance has done the most damage. "Play what the congregation likes" is only one of the frequent comments that shows the encroachment of the entertainment world into worship. The idea of word and music as an offering to God rarely exists. We forget that worship is not entertainment but participation.

Worship requires an active congregation, not an audience. The question "Will they like it?" must be replaced by "Will He accept it?" The question "Does this music please me?" is not as important as "Is this music worthy of God?"

### *Spirit*

With the idea of the direction of our worship as springboard, we can explore the third important word of the text — the spirit of worship, the relationship of Subject and Object, the mystical union of Body and Head. This is a difficult concept.

When I was a boy, I thought worshiping in spirit simply meant not bowing down to idols, but a more mature Christian realizes that image-worship is an insidious thing, able to penetrate even our worship of God. We are not "pure" spirit, therefore physical elements in worship will always be present. But they must not call attention to themselves; they must not detract us from the contemplation of the importance of being before God.

Music that calls attention to itself with catchy tunes and jazzy rhythms violates the spirit of worship. Besides distracting, it contradicts the idea of self-effacement that is implicit in our sacred drama. This self-loss expresses itself in the awe, praise, and humility that each worshiper must experience. And it must express itself in the details of public worship. Awe in the presence of God means that buttoning up your coat during the doxology is disrespectful. Slapping your hymn book into the rack shows a lack of concentration on oneness of devotion. Praise of God means greeting an unfamiliar hymn as a new avenue of praise, not as an unpleasant interruption in the well-rutted path of so-called worship. Humility implies that each person present must actively offer his prayers, thoughts, and gifts to God.

### *Truth*

Our Lord has also exhorted us to be true in our worship. Sincerity of response is, of course, the duty of each worshiper. But truth in worship can mean more than the genuineness of the individual. Truth is also defined as correctness, exactness, and correspondence to reality. These are concepts addressed to our intellect, and applicable to the worship service itself. Truth in our worship services means that they must reflect planning and purpose, that our God-directed devotion will manifest itself in a well-appointed order, that our co-operative adoration will form a unified, organic whole, returning to God His gift of beauty.

## II. VIOLATION

Music in worship, then, must meet two standards. It must be well-appointed, a planned part of an integrated service, and it must be correct. By correct I am not implying that it be free from wrong notes, ideal as that situation might be, but that it

be music that is artistically and historically valid.

Both of these requirements are absent in the increasingly popular "special" music in church services — tasteless performances of musically and textually inferior stuff, reflecting neither Biblical doctrines nor good standards of church music. "Special" music in no way belongs to the worship service; it is an isolated five-minute performance sandwiched between hymn and sermon.

The choral anthem, if not integrated with the rest of the service, degenerates into a type of special music. It is a pleasant or unpleasant interruption, depending on one's attitude toward choirs. Choral singing as a distinct element in church services is frowned upon by some, and was discouraged by, for example, the Christian Reformed Synod of 1930. The growing use of the choir in the Christian Reformed Church in spite of this Synodical recommendation is an interesting phenomenon indeed. In many of the churches there is a flourishing choir, singing with or without the guidance of any worship principle from their consistories. It is possible to hear trite and flamboyant music in Christian Reformed churches, music which should never be allowed to enter the worship service of a perfect God. It is possible to hear shallow and egocentric texts not in accord with Reformed doctrine. This music has entered the churches by default. Church assemblies can recommend orders of worship, publish hymn books, and formulate principles of church music, but the final responsibility lies with the congregation and its consistory.

It is a responsibility not many of us are prepared to face, and a lack of musical training is not the most important reason. Much more lamentable is the dearth of good music that accompanies religious practice today. A large body of so-called "sacred" music is little more than a maudlin series of musical and textual cliches, rendered sacrosanct by the title, or a cross on the title page, and parading as music worthy of God. A shallow nineteenth-century style and its intoxicating effect on the superficial emotions has permeated all phases of present-day musical life, but most of all the church, the last place it should have entered.

For many, sacred music means the barber-shop harmonies of Singspiration and Homer Rodeheaver, or the sentimental ditties of a converted night-club singer who has changed her religion, but not her style of singing. The great tradition of Lutheran chorales and Genevan psalm tunes is regarded with tolerant dislike as stuffy and old-fashioned.

These persons forget that the great old melodies and the church music based on them will of necessity sound strange to them. It is a musical language very different from most of the music heard today, as far from the daily offerings of the radio

as a Biblical theology is from comic books. It is music to which the church alone can open its doors. Radio, television, and even the concert stage are alien to it. To many it will sound archaic, remote, austere, since it strives to call attention to God instead of itself. Catchy tunes and mere prettiness are foreign to it. But in the past century the majority of Protestant churches also have closed their doors to this music, substituting instead the music which has its fountainhead in the sentimental, bombastic style of degraded nineteenth-century Romanticism, or the trite effects of a folksy ballad. Egocentric texts like "O That Will Be Glory For Me" have replaced "Our Father, Clothed With Majesty," not in the pews perhaps, but certainly on the organ racks.

### III. SUGGESTIONS

Here it is important to remember that music is in no way essential to worship. Music can intensify our praise of God, stimulate God-directed thoughts and feelings, but it is not an absolutely necessary ingredient in worship. All the more reason that if music be included, it be a definite contribution and not a distraction. Organists and choir directors would do well to think about this as they prepare for Sunday.

This weekly preparation should be a co-operative effort of organist, choir, and minister. A central idea should unify the entire service, not just the Scripture text and sermon. The hymns should be chosen carefully by the minister and church musician, and not on Saturday night. The anthems and choral responses should follow the theme of the service. This is not easily accomplished. It takes work, planning, and co-operation. It is here that the well-trained church musician, rare as that creature may be, can make his contribution. Each Sunday morning in most Christian Reformed churches, for example, the theme is taken from the Heidelberg Catechism. Even in a church not interested in a meaningful church music program, the organist or choir director can plan the music around the pertinent Lord's Day.

Some may complain that their church cannot afford a well-trained church musician or support a costly church music program. This is not an excuse for having inferior music. Good music does not mean difficult music. Within the grasp of every organist are the great hymns, psalms, and chorales; if he is incapable of playing these, he had better be replaced. But no matter what the size or budget of the church, a music program will be successful only when there are ministers willing to co-operate, consistories open to new ideas and willing to trust capable musical leaders without suggesting that next week the choir sing this or that "old favorite."

No matter how well-trained they may be, most

of our church musicians are forced to satisfy the tastes of the congregation. A capable organist is regarded with tolerant resentment: someone who plays all Bach and is the enemy of hymns. He will be accepted only when he chooses the shallow products of Romanticism or the countless, bad, gospel hymns. It is a sad commentary on the taste of a congregation if in order to hold the attention of each person present, the organist must sink to the vulgar level of such hymns as "The Love of God" or "It Is No Secret."

Such music violates more than mere good taste. It violates the idea of self-effacement that is implicit in worship. It violates the idea of offering a gift of beauty to God. Its low artistic and theological standards make it music unworthy of Him.

Music worthy of God is the responsibility of more than the organist and choir. It is the responsibility of Sunday school teachers, Christian school teachers, and youth-club directors, many of whom are neglecting the great and good music for the catchy choruses and jazzy gospel hymns. "But children want these catchy tunes." This I have never been able to believe. Any teacher knows that one of the great joys of teaching is the quick, natural response of a child to something beautiful. One of the rewards of work in church music is the zest with which children learn and perform really good music. The church should be a place where young people are challenged, not coddled and underestimated.

Music worthy of God is the responsibility of music committees who should be concerning themselves with principles of worship and the implications these principles will have for the music. Questions must be asked. "Does our congregation sing well?" "How can we improve?" (This might mean dismissing an organist who plays our hymns poorly, even though she be the minister's daughter.) "What is the function of our choir, and is it fulfilling this function?" In many churches an honest answer to these questions will mean placing the responsibility of the music in the hands of one capable person. It is self-evident that having three or four organists in one church cannot result in a uniform, well-developed style of congregational singing. The churches of the Reformation are singing churches, and this heritage must be guarded jealously.

Music worthy of God is the responsibility of consistories, who should take frequent self-critical looks at that puzzling mixture called "order" of worship. The maintainance of the status quo in the worship services of some denominations seems to have an unbreakable hold on the laity. Orders of worship tend toward sameness and unthinking adoption of traditionalism. From New York to California they follow the same general pattern. No one could guess that in my own church (the Christian Reformed), for example, no official pattern of worship has

been laid down. And yet the pattern in each church has its own little different twist. It is at once painfully alike and painfully unlike any other, in a limbo between meaningful unity and stimulating variety. I am not advocating rigid conformity to a set pattern of worship. This was attempted by the Christian Reformed Synod of 1926 with rather unsuccessful results. Nor am I advocating that each church have a pattern completely different from any other. I simply state that the autonomy of each church is a beautiful thing, and worship services could reflect it. If there are differences, they should be meaningful and well thought out. This would eliminate organ interludes to cover up coughing; it would eliminate misplaced doxologies. The line "wait Thy word of peace" sung after the benediction is one of these painful slips that shows lack of thoughtfulness on the part of minister, consistory, and every worshiper.

Music worthy of God is the responsibility of ministers, without whose help no real improvements can be made. They must realize that if hours are spent preparing the sermon, a few minutes choosing the hymns, and no time at all planning the remaining worship music, the result will be a lop-sided service. Small wonder that the congregation seems to sit still and concentrate only during the sermon. The rest of the service gives opportunity for coughing, whispering, and bulletin reading.

But most important of all, each one of us should take a long, careful look at his attitudes toward worship. Worship in all its forms requires concentration. Church music is a phase of religious practice that needs the questioning and self-critical spirit of Protestantism.

Complaining about church music is a popular thing to do, and it has been done since the establishment of the church. St. Augustine, Bach, and Schweitzer are illustrious predecessors of anyone who decries the state of sacred music. And the history of church music has been tortuous. It has reached dazzling peaks of perfection, and wallowed in deep sloughs of aesthetic deficiency. Perhaps it is only natural to see one's own era as a bad one, but it is undeniable that the cheap gospel hymn and the weekly "special" music performances in our services have led us into a morass from which it will be difficult to emerge. The lack of planning and of unifying purpose has encouraged worship services that are eclectic, egocentric, and musically superficial.

Some may feel that insisting on music of dignity and artistic worth is being too professional or too idealistic. These objectors must be reminded that the God we worship is perfect beyond human comprehension. Music performed to His glory must be governed by a consistently self-critical and dedicated standard of perfection.

# Election: Concealed or Revealed?

by James Daane

The first misconstruction of the doctrine of election discussed by Professor G. Berkouwer in his book *Divine Election* regards God's election as an arbitrary act of absolute power. (See *Reformed Journal*, November 1960.) The second misconstruction, here discussed, concerns election as it is related to the secret will of God. In this misconstruction election is regarded as one of the undisclosed mysteries of the hidden, secret, divine will. Knowledge and assurance of one's personal election is consequently regarded as impossible. Being unable to penetrate into the secrets of God's unrevealed will, the Christian cannot know with certainty and confidence that he has been chosen by God to share in the final manifestation of His glory.

Reformed Protestants should remember that this is the position of the Roman Catholic Church. This church is officially committed to the theological position that no individual can be certain of his election. The reason given is that such knowledge is not presented to anyone in the biblical revelation. The Council of Trent asserted that no one can know with certainty "that he belongs to those that are destined to be saved." Exception to this occurs only if the individual receives a special, extra-biblical revelation of his election.

Although Reformed theology rejects the idea that election is unknowable and the assurance of salvation impossible, some Reformed Christians have tended to subscribe to this position and have suffered in consequence terrible religious uncertainty and anxiety. As was noted in a former article in this series, it has not been uncommon for Reformed pastors to be confronted by anxious souls who believe the entire Bible but can find no peace of soul regarding their own personal election.

Why do these pastoral problems arise? Why does the joy of salvation elude so many true Christians? Why does the pastor find it so impossible to bring such Christians peace of mind and soul? The answer to these questions, it seems, lies in the fact that the idea of reprobation, regarded as something belonging to the secret will of God, casts its shadow over the idea of their personal election. Strictly speaking, what troubles these anxious souls is not election. What robs them of peace of soul is the fear that within the secret and hidden will of God they perhaps are reprobate. The possibility of reprobation casts its shadow over election; the hiddenness of the secret divine will overshadows the revealed will of God. The idea that in the secret and undisclosed will of God they may be reprobates becomes a men-

ace to the knowledge of election and to the assurance of salvation, without which no Christian can enjoy peace of mind. How can they heed the admonition of Peter to make their calling and election sure if in the background there is always the haunting possibility that in the hidden divine will they are rejected by God? Along this avenue, the finding of peace is impossible, for what their religious distress calls for is not to make their election sure but to make sure that they are not reprobate.

The intensity of this religious anxiety is deepened and the way to peace of soul further obscured whenever the idea is urged that God's secret will is God's actual will — the one which will surely be accomplished — and God's revealed will His unactual will — the one which is not really accomplished because at bottom it is not really and actually God's will. At times both H. Bavinck and L. Berkhof contribute to this obscuration of election. Berkouwer takes issue with Bavinck for the latter's assertion that the revealed will of God is "actually not the will of God but only His command and precept." Berkhof declares that "we should remember that the moral law, the rule of our life, is also in a sense the embodiment of the will of God" (*Systematic Theology*, p. 79). Is the revealed will of God in law and gospel, in Christ Himself, not actually the will of God? Is it "only" His command? Is it merely "in a sense" the will of God? To assert this, says Berkouwer, is to turn the hidden will of God into a shadow that falls over the law and the gospel and into a threat to God's will as revealed in Christ.

HOW CAN WE ESCAPE the consequences of allowing the hidden will of God to overshadow and render problematical the revealed will of God? How can we escape the situation where the hidden possibility of reprobation renders the certainty of election impossible? How can we protect the teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism that Christ "has fully revealed to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption?"

Berkouwer finds his answer to this problem by turning to the many passages in Scripture which deal with the hiddenness of God, the *deus absconditus*. The Scriptures declare concerning God that "clouds and darkness are round about him" (Ps. 97:2), that He covers the brightness of His glory, for no man can see His face and live (Exod. 33:20), and, to mention no more, that God dwells in a light inaccessible (I Tim. 6:16). God is indeed a God

that hideth Himself (Isa. 45:15), a *deus absconditus*. Nevertheless, the concept of divine hiddenness in biblical thought, Berkouwer urges, never threatens the revealed truth and dependability of God; it never casts the slightest shadow over the concept of divine self-revelation, *deus revelatus*. None of the hidden, secret, unrevealed things of God limit or render doubtful the things revealed. Nothing in the Bible even suggests that anything that God has not told us can render null and void, or touch the validity, truth, and dependability of what He has told us. The *deus absconditus* neither threatens nor menaces the *deus revelatus*.

There is indeed no tension between God as hidden and God as revealed. To entertain the idea of a God in whom hiddenness and revelation are in opposition to each other would be to entertain a dualistic idea of God. The notion of a *deus absconditus* which casts a menacing shadow over the *deus revelatus*, thereby depriving the Christian of the certainty of election, does not stem from Scripture. It stems rather from that error which defines God's sovereign will apart from His grace and thus as a mere *potentia absoluta*, i.e., as naked, brute power. It is only when the hidden, secret will of God is regarded as the product of an absolute but naked, unqualified power that this hidden will can be regarded as something which undercuts the truth and overshadows the validity and dependability of God's revealed will. And when this occurs we have in the name of a *potentia absoluta* cast a shadow over our Lord Himself and have rendered suspect the authentic character of Jesus Christ as the revelation of God. In biblical thought there is no tension or contradiction between what God has and has not revealed to us. Paul, for example, declared that God dwells in an inaccessible light, but he also states that he proclaimed the whole counsel of God — a truth which, as we have seen, is echoed in the declaration of the Heidelberg Catechism that Christ has "fully" revealed the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption.

IT IS A MISTAKE, says Berkouwer, to include the individual's election within those secret things which according to Deuteronomy 31:31 belong to God. Although no individual can point to a "proof text" which spells out his name and election, yet his personal election is not a hidden phenomenon. It is rather something disclosed and revealed to us in Christ, for it occurs in Christ, who is the revelation of God. The individual can therefore know his election in faith, even as in faith he knows Christ. To know Christ is to know one's election, for Christ is the revelation both of His election and of ours. To perceive Christ through the eyes of faith as God's Elect is by faith to perceive our own election.

Since our election takes place "in Christ" (Eph. 1:4), Christ is not to be regarded as an executor of

an election that occurred outside of Him. Our election is not an event which occurred antecedent, or prior, to Christ. It occurred, as Paul teaches, *in Christ*. To insert the idea of temporal sequence (or logical priority) at this point in order to make our election first, and Christ and His election second, is an error.<sup>1</sup> Our election is as eternal as Christ Himself, for we are elected in Him. Our election is not the foundation of Christ's election; on the contrary, Christ in His election is the foundation of our election. As such, Christ is, as Calvin said, the "mirror" of our election. As the mirror of our election, Christ reveals and reflects our election. Thus our election is knowable in Christ.

It is true, of course, that Christ is not the foundation of our election in the sense that by His merits He moved the Father to elect us, for Christ Himself is the Father's gift. But if Christ is not the foundation of our election in this "persuasive sense," neither is Christ as the mirror (*speculum*) merely a reflection of what occurred in eternity apart from Him. Christ did not stand outside of God's eternal counsel so as later to become the reflection or the executor of what preceded Him. Rather, Christ is Himself part of God's eternal counsel — indeed, in this, too, Christ has the pre-eminence. This pre-eminence is theoretically denied when the counsel of God is conceived as an event which occurred first and outside of Christ, and when Christ is then regarded as second, as a mere executor of that which is first.

Election is not first and grace second, in the sense that God first arbitrarily elects and thereupon becomes gracious. The Canons themselves reject the notion that election is "merely and solely the good pleasure of God." Election is always gracious in its nature (for which reason that divine sovereignty which elects can never be defined apart from divine grace) and this grace is of the very essence of election. As there is no election which occurs outside of, or antecedent to, Christ, there is no election which precedes grace.

Since election, then, occurs "in Christ" and Christ is the mirror of our election, so that to know Christ by faith is by faith also to know our personal election, it is only within the biblically stipulated boundaries, namely, the limits of faith, that election can be rightly understood. As Calvin asserted in his *Institutes*, "But if we are elected in him [Christ], we cannot find the certainty of our election in ourselves; and not even in God the Father, if we look at him apart from the Son."

1. For this reason it is a serious error to make election and reprobation the *distinctive* point of departure for theology. A theological method which abstracts election from Christ and then posits it as the proper point of departure for theological interpretation not only necessitates interpreting Christ in terms of our election, but inevitably produces an abstract theology.

# “I Wrote the Earliest Gospel”

by John Calvin Reid

## Mark

MY NAME IS JOHN MARK, and I am best known to students of the Gospels as the author of the first and the shortest of the four.

I never dreamed, of course, when I began writing, that my book would be called a “Gospel,” revered and read down through the centuries. My purpose was a more modest one. I wrote with one church and one generation primarily in mind.

That church, as you may know, was the one located in the great metropolis of Rome during the latter half of the first century and of which I was a member. How plain and unadorned it was in comparison with many of the churches of your day! Pipe organ, carpeted aisles, stained-glass windows, cushioned pews, ornate altar — we had none of these things. But we did have love for one another, loyalty to Christ, and steadfastness under trial — qualities which make any church great, regardless of appearance or physical equipment. These qualities your church also possesses, I trust, although there might be some reason to question your ability to stand fast under trial, because, you see, you have never been tested as our church in Rome was tested just before I began to write my book.

Let me tell you about that.

As you may recall, the official policy of the Roman government toward all religions in the empire was one of *tolerance*. Liberty of worship was freely granted to conquered races and nations — so long as its practice did not interfere with the peace of the state or corrupt the morals of society. Thus, as all students of the New Testament know, the first persecution of the Christian Church came from Jewish, rather than Roman, authorities. As a matter of fact, at first, as the Book of Acts records, Roman officials in Palestine not only refrained from persecuting the Church, but actually protected the leaders of the new faith against both Jewish accusations and the violence of mobs. At this stage, the Roman Empire was really an ally rather than an enemy of Christianity; so it was perfectly natural for Paul, writing a letter to our church in Rome, to counsel us to be subject unto the higher powers because they were ordained of God, and to state very emphatically that “whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God . . . For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil.”

Along this same line, you will recall Paul’s dramatic appeal to Caesar, recorded in chapter 25 of the Book of Acts. He was standing trial in Caesarea — one of the cities of Palestine — before a Roman governor by the name of Festus. His accusers, as usual, were Jews, and when Paul saw that Festus, like Pilate before him, was about to yield to pressure, he squared his shoulders and said: “I stand at Caesar’s judgment seat where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest . . . if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.”

His decision was well taken, for of all the cities throughout the empire, Rome itself was the one place where he knew he could be sure of protection and a fair trial, not only for himself, but for the new faith which he espoused and of which he was the most courageous exponent.

Under this state of affairs, for a number of years — up until A.D. 64 to be exact — our church in Rome had grown and prospered. We were shielded from Jewish persecution by the might of the emperor himself and, of course, never dreamed that we had anything to fear from him.

Then, like a bolt of lightning from the blue, the blow descended — the first persecution of Christians at the order of a Roman emperor!

If ever there was an egomaniac and a fiend rolled into one, that person was Nero. He came to the throne in A.D. 54 at the age of 17, and hardly a year had passed when his evil nature began to assert itself. In A.D. 55 he caused Britannicus, son of the former Emperor Claudius, to be poisoned, and four years later ordered his mother to be slain with a sword. He divorced, and later put to death, his first wife, Octavia. He killed his second wife, Poppaea Sabina, in a fit of rage. A third woman, whom he refused to become his wife, was slain; then he killed the husband of a fourth woman, in order that she might become his wife. Upon discovering a plot against him, he had Seneca, his former tutor, a brilliant philosopher and writer, put to death, together with many other famous men.

This was the fiendish ruler, whom the writer of the Book of Revelation fittingly calls “a beast with seven heads and ten horns.”

During the early years of his reign, Nero manifested no hostility toward the Christians. The event which turned him against them with all the fury of his evil soul was the fire which all but destroyed the city in A.D. 64. That terrible fire, according to the current story, had

\*This piece is taken from the recent book entitled *We Wrote the Gospels* by John Calvin Reid, published by the Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1960. \$2.00. In coming issues the *Journal* will present the imaginative personal accounts of Matthew, Luke, and John. Dr. Reid is minister of the Mt. Lebanon Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.

en started by a secret order of the emperor himself, and he literally "fiddled while Rome burned," that is, with harp in hand and a secretary writing as he watched the lurid flames leaping toward the sky, he undertook to compose an epic poem which he insanely hoped would make his name immortal. Then, to escape the blame for the conflagration, he caused the rumor to be circulated that it was the Christians who had set the city on fire and issued orders that they should be punished accordingly.

Far and wide the Roman soldiers roamed, seeking out the Christians and throwing them into prison. As the Roman historian Tacitus has recorded: "First, those were seized who confessed they were Christians; next, their information, a vast multitude were convicted not so much on the charge of setting the city on fire as of hating the human race. And in their deaths they were made the subject of sport, for they were covered with the skins of wild beasts and were worried to death by dogs, or nailed to crosses, or set fire to, and when day dawned were burned to serve for nocturnal lights. Nero erected his own gardens for that spectacle, and exhibited circus games, indiscriminately mingling with the common people dressed as a charioteer, or else standing in a chariot."

When these terrible things began to happen in Rome, I had not yet come to the city. I was with Simon Peter, serving as his secretary and interpreter, as he traveled here and there preaching and teaching in various churches throughout the Roman Empire.

I well remember the day we first received word of how our Christian brethren in Rome were suffering under Nero, because immediately Peter wrote and dispatched a letter to the churches he and I had recently visited, urging them to be steadfast in case similar trials and persecutions should break out among them. I quote here from the First Epistle of Peter preserved in your New Testament: "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in so far as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you . . . . Therefore, let those who suffer according to God's will do right and entrust their souls to a faithful creator."

Shortly after this, Peter decided that we should go to Rome personally to strengthen and encourage the Christians and to comfort them in their sorrow over the loss of loved ones. In due time, we arrived in the city. It is impossible to describe how much the presence of Peter meant to those Christian believers at that time.

He spoke to them of things Jesus had done and quoted words that Jesus had spoken, and in particular as he described the Master's courage when He faced His own cross and later died upon it, praying for those who had crucified Him, their bowed heads and moist eyes gave

eloquent answer to the implied challenge, "Who follows in His train?"

Then a second blow fell. Peter himself was arrested and, after a trial that was only a mockery, was led out to be crucified. More than once I had heard him tell other Christians, with quiet humility, how he had once failed his Lord by denying that he knew Him. In the very way he told the story, he gave assurance that he would never again be a coward. But now we had the proof! For as he stood facing his cross — so similar to the one upon which Jesus had died — he calmly looked upon it and then, turning to the chief executioner, made the request that he might be crucified with his head downward. "For," said he, "I am not worthy to die as my Lord did!"

It was Peter's death, more than any other thing, that set me to thinking about what I could do to serve and to help my fellow Christians in Rome as he had done. I could not preach or teach as did he. I did not possess his eloquence or his personality and, of course, was not one of the Twelve, as he had been.

But I did have my notes from his sermons and his teachings, also many vivid memories of things he had said while I had been serving as his secretary and interpreter. So, I began wondering if I, with these materials at hand, could not weave together a story about the life and work of Jesus which would continue to strengthen and encourage the sorely tried Christians in the church at Rome.

I was not yet fully ready to undertake the task, because my own faith had been severely shaken and my personal grief over the death of Peter was very deep. I decided to go away from Rome for a while, to collect my thoughts and to give further consideration to my plan. Soon after my departure, word reached me that the Apostle Paul had also come to Rome, where he had been thrown into prison, and that he had expressed a desire to see me. It was his friend Timothy who brought me this message (see II Timothy 4:11). So I immediately returned to Rome.

What a heartening experience it was to see and to talk with Paul again! Years earlier — I was quite a young man then — I had started with him on his first missionary journey. But at Perga, having become discouraged, I had left the party and returned to my home in Jerusalem. Paul had been quite severe with me at that time, and had refused to take me with him later when he and Barnabas started on their second missionary journey.

The intervening years had mellowed his spirit, and he was now kindness and graciousness personified as he talked with me in his prison cell. He heartily approved of my idea to write a book to preserve Peter's recollections and stories about Jesus, and shared with me some of his own rich experiences as a missionary of Christ. He expressed a willingness to help me further, once I had begun the actual task of writing.

Unfortunately this was denied me, because not many

days after my visit with him he, too, was condemned to death and led away to execution.

This sealed my purpose to get to the task of writing my book. Now that the two greatest leaders of the Church were gone, I realized more than ever that the Christians in Rome needed some written record of the life of Jesus to comfort them in the midst of their present sufferings, and to strengthen them for other trials yet to be experienced.

So my primary purpose as I began to write was to bring courage to my sorely tried fellow Christians in Rome. What Peter had done by word of mouth, I would do by word of pen. I freely used not only his thoughts, but also his words as I remembered them. For, as you have already heard, I had been his secretary as well as his traveling companion.

It was not my purpose to present a comprehensive or detailed account of the life of Jesus, but to tell the story briefly and simply — recording and emphasizing those incidents in which He is seen to be active, courageous, and strong, adequate in the face of every experience, even triumphant over death itself.

I made it clear, not only that He was unafraid of the cross, but that He was more than equal to it. Although He knew it was coming, He did not seek to escape it. Instead, by fellowship with God He prepared Himself for it; in Gethsemane's garden He further strengthened Himself for it; in Pilate's presence He quietly accepted it; and on Calvary He bore Himself in such a manner that the Roman centurion who was in charge of His execution was so moved that he exclaimed: "Truly, this man was God's Son!"

That exclamation, let it be said, I consider the climax of my Gospel. Between the lines I was saying in effect to my fellow Christians in Rome: "You who face the cold steel of your Roman persecutors, you who may be called upon to die in the arena tomorrow, remember that He whom you call Lord and Master so conducted Himself upon His cross that one of those proud Romans, who have now become your enemies and destroyers, a military officer who doubtless had witnessed many a crucifixion without batting an eye, in this case was so moved with admiration as to cry out: "Truly this man was God's Son!"

And if that exclamation be the climax of my Gospel, the paragraph I would designate as the central passage you will find in the last part of chapter 8. There you will read how Jesus revealed to His disciples, by the questions He asked them and through the confession of Simon Peter, that He was the Christ. Thereupon He immediately proceeds to explain that in order to fulfill His mission as the Messiah, He "must suffer many things" and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. But Peter (remember that by the time I wrote my Gospel he, too, had been crucified) would not have it so. It was as difficult for him then to accept the idea of a suffering and crucified Messiah as it was later for the Christians in Rome to accept their own martyrdom.

So he turned and began to rebuke Jesus, thereby seeking to change His mind about the cross.

But Jesus in turn severely rebuked Peter, saying: "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not on the side of God, but of men." Then, significantly, He added: "If a man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

Thus writing, you see, I was pointing my fellow Christians in Rome to the heroic example of their Lord and quoting His own words regarding the place of the cross in His life and in that of His followers, and thus preparing them to be ready for the worst. "Be of good cheer," I was saying in effect, "in the world ye shall have tribulation, but your Master has overcome the world!" In paragraph after paragraph I challenged them to do what the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews directly exhorts his readers to do: "Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or faint-hearted." In my way, I was delivering to the members of the martyr church at Rome the same stirring message that Paul was delivering to them when he, in effect, wrote: "Though for his sake you are being killed all the day long: though you are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered — in all these things you may be more than conquerors through him who loves you, knowing that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus your Lord."

Today I humbly thank God that my book was not written in vain. Other cruel emperors followed Nero, and in the amphitheater more lions, tigers, and crosses. But for every ten Christians who died, it seemed that a hundred new converts stepped forward, until truly the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church. And ultimately even a Roman emperor bowed his head and said, "Galilean, Thou hast conquered!" Visit the amphitheater in Rome today! It is a scene of ruin and decay. No stately monument marks the spot where thousands died rather than deny the name of their Lord. No glorious cathedral has been built to commemorate their courage. But right in the center of the ruins stands a simple cross upon which is carved in Latin the inscription: "In His Cross Our Only Hope."

These words summarize the message I was trying to get through to those first-century Christians through my Gospel, and that cross standing in the soil drenched by their blood is proof that my message did get through.

And that message needs to get through to the heads of discouraged Christians in your generation too. You, as well as those Christians in Rome, need to face the fact that tragedy is not accidental to the Christian way of life, but central. Christian faith is not a way around

ouble, but a way *through* it. Christ's way is not a way of escape, but a way of triumph! As a well-known theologian of your own generation, Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, has put it: "Christianity is a faith which takes us through tragedy to beyond tragedy, by way of the cross a victory in the cross."

Some of you may be trying to find the meaning of life through personal achievement, forgetting that the paths of glory—all of them—lead but to the grave. Others may be making their family their chief end, forgetting that the family is only a little less mortal than the individual. Vanity and disillusionment are sure to be the end of the line for those who make the state their God, for the nation is only a little less mortal than the family. Individuals, families, nations—all are marching toward death and oblivion. That is the inescapably tragic aspect of life. What a deep, but too often forgotten, truth the Apostle Paul was uttering when he said: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

But you whose lives are hid with Christ in God have a hope that reaches as far beyond this life as God is beyond it, as far as Christ is beyond it—"Because I live, ye shall live also." That is the triumphant aspect of the truth of which I was reminding my Christian friends in Rome when I wrote my Gospel, and of which I remind you, His followers in the twentieth century. The New Testament story does not end with the cross on a hill,

but with the empty tomb in a garden. Not with your Lord's seventh word on Calvary, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," but with His last word from Olivet, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Then,

*Lift up your heads, ye sorrowing ones,  
And be glad of heart,  
For Calvary and Easter Day  
Were just three days apart.*

\* \* \* \*

#### For Personal Meditation

"That seemeth a hard saying to many, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.' But there is no health of the soul, no hope of eternal life, save in the cross. If thou willingly bear the cross, it will bear thee, and will bring thee to the end which thou seekest."

"How then dost thou seek another way than the royal way, which is the way of the Holy Cross? Set thyself, therefore, like a good and faithful servant of Christ to the manful bearing of the cross of thy Lord, who out of love was crucified for thee. Thus shalt thou be worthy one day to wear the crown."

(Thomas a Kempis—"Of The Royal Way of the Holy Cross")

# The Word of God and Learning

by Nicholas Wolterstorff

"How is our Christian faith related to learning?" "How are the Scriptures, the Word of God, related to scholarship?" To the intellectual and scholarly Christian these are matters of ultimate concern, as indeed they have always been. For though centuries of discussion on this issue have produced a great deal of intense feeling, even of ill-will, they have not produced any comparable amount of clarity in the solutions to the problem — let alone unanimity. So any kind of fresh approach which offers clarity where before there was obscurity, solutions where before there were problems, is to be welcomed. Only by patiently striving toward clarity can we hope to arrive — in love and kindness — at the truth on this matter; uttering old formulae with intensity, or propounding confusion and obscurity with a pro-

found air, will evoke emotions but not answers.

In a recent set of lectures my colleague in the Philosophy Department at Calvin College, Dr. H. Evan Runner, addresses himself to precisely these questions.<sup>1</sup> He says, "To most of us, at least at first glance, the principles of mathematics and logic, for example, would very much seem to remain the same, whether Scripture is brought into the picture or not. The statement  $2 \times 2 = 4$  is true for everybody, isn't it? And thermodynamics would seem to remain thermodynamics; and agronomy, agronomy. What in the wide world, then, might the relation of Scripture to these and other areas of learning be?" (p. 89). In what follows I should

like to consider Dr. Runner's answer to this question.

DR. RUNNER begins by saying that the connection is not merely "extrinsic," by which he means that the connection is not merely that of a Christian man teaching biology, chemistry, etc. He says this as if he expected some people to disagree with him; but I think all of us would agree that this is not the only connection between Christianity and learning. Rather, we all hold that there is some sort of connection between the Word of God and various subject matters themselves, the only question being: *What* sort of connection? We all agree, in short, that there is here what Dr. Runner calls an "intrinsic" connection. But we want to know what kind of connection this is.

Dr. Runner, though, gives an argu-

1. "The Relation of the Bible to Learning" in *Christian Perspectives 1960* (Pella, Iowa: Pella Publishing Co.).

ment designed to show that Christians must accept an intrinsic connection between the Word of God and learning: "That brings us back to our question, whether there is an intrinsic connection between the Word of God and the world of learning. Can we sincerely speak of *Scriptural* principles here? Is Scripture also in this area of our life a lamp to our feet and light to our path? If we cannot honestly answer these questions in the affirmative then we are left with merely Christian *people* who work at *a science*. A science, presumably, that has principles of its own, which secrets it yields up to those who go to work on it. An *autonomous science* . . . , as we are accustomed to speak of it. But if *that* is the true state of affairs it does indeed involve a different conception of the Word of God and of the Christian religion. For there is then one area, at least, in our human life for which the Word of God gives no light, and indeed which itself requires no such light inasmuch as it would seem to have a *light of its own* (its own principle), at which we can get unaided . . . Then the Christian religion would have a limited validity . . ." (p. 90).

Now in the first place, Dr. Runner remarks that if we are to understand the nature of this intrinsic connection between the Word of God and learning, we had better come to some agreement on what is the Word of God. Here he is concerned to make two points. First, he holds that the Word of God is a *unity*. It is not completely clear to me what he means by this; but I think he means that the Word of God has some one central message or theme, that all its various parts can be understood as ramifications of this central theme, and that to try to understand them in any other way would be to misunderstand them. Secondly, he holds that the Word of God is a *Power* that comes to us and not something to which we come with our understanding. Again, it is not completely clear what he means by this. In places it sounds as if, like many contemporary theological writers influenced by existentialism, he is playing down the role of the Bible in the Christian life, and holding that Christian faith does not include belief in any propositions. This of course

makes Christianity completely subjective; and I feel sure that Dr. Runner does not intend this. For in fact he constantly quotes the Bible; and in various passages throughout the lectures he uses the terms "Word of God," "Scriptures," and "Bible" interchangeably. So I think we must conclude that, without saying so, he is making something like the classic Reformed distinction between the Scriptures and the testimony of the Spirit to the Scriptures. Only for both of these he uses the expression "Word of God."

Now if someone contends that there is one central theme in the Word of God, it is incumbent on him to try to say what this theme is; and this Dr. Runner does. If I understand him, he holds that this central theme has these three aspects: (1) God has laid down laws for His creation but is not Himself bound by these laws; (2) the human self is a "radical, integral unity," a *religious* unity; (3) the human self is by its nature and inevitably subject to the laws which God has laid down. At this point someone might wonder why these are not *three* themes, rather than one theme with three aspects. To this Dr. Runner replies that these three aspects are not independent, for no one of them can be understood without understanding the others. Now I think one might very profitably discuss whether this is a good summary of the essence of God's Word. I am myself bothered, among other things, by the extreme ambiguity in Dr. Runner's use of the word "law," and the vagueness in his use of the word "unity." But let us overlook this in order to get back to our main topic, and henceforth in our discussion view the Word of God in this light.

HERE I THINK it is important to be concrete; too many discussions of this topic suffer from excess of generality. So let us pick a particular law from a particular science, and deal with it. Any law will do as well as any other, but let us pick one from logic. One of the laws of logic is this: From a statement of the form "All dogs are animals" one cannot validly infer a statement of the form "All animals are dogs." To make such a move would be to commit what is known, in the

jargon of logicians, as the *fallacy of illicit conversion*. If I am not mistaken it was the pagan Greek philosopher Aristotle who first formulated this law; and I am not aware that anyone has ever disputed it.

Let us take it for granted, provided this law is indeed true, that it is one of the laws laid down by God in His creation. Then how is knowing the law of illicit conversion related to knowing that God has laid it down, or more broadly, related to knowing God's Word? The most intimate possible connection would be this: No one could know the law of illicit conversion without knowing God's Word. And to know the law of illicit conversion one need only know God's Word in all its implications. These two sentences do not say the same thing. To put them more generally, the first says that the pagan can have no knowledge since he does not know God's Word. The second says that in knowing God's Word we have all knowledge. Let me treat these then in order.

In many passages Dr. Runner seems to say that the pagan necessarily lacks all knowledge. He says, for example, "I mean by Law every word of God by which He has subjected the creation to His Will or Rule. Law is thus nothing other than the Will of the sovereign God for His creation. But for that very reason it is not possible to have a true knowledge of the Law apart from a true knowledge of God as sovereign Creator" (pp. 100-101). In this passage Dr. Runner says that Law is *every* Word of God; but then, of course, no one can know God's Law, since no one knows *every* Word of God. However, Dr. Runner says that Christians *do* know God's Law. So one naturally concludes that what he really wishes to say is this: It is impossible to have a true knowledge of *any* law apart from a true knowledge of God as sovereign Creator. Then it follows, since he did not have this knowledge, that Aristotle did not truly know the law of illicit conversion. And this is a truly astonishing thesis: Aristotle never really knew the law of illicit conversion, though it was he who first formulated it. What arguments does Dr. Runner give in order to persuade us of this very surprising view?

In the passage just quoted he appears to give this reason: Aristotle did not know the law of illicit conversion, because laws are nothing other than the Will of the sovereign God, and Aristotle did not know this. Now when put thus, this argument seems to me certainly invalid. Granted that this law would not exist unless God had established it; how does it follow that one can't *know* this law without *knowing* that God has established it? Surely one can be acquainted with a certain traffic law without knowing who established it. What makes this case different?

But it is always best, when possible, to avoid accusing an author of making a logical blunder; and I think the passage quoted can be given another interpretation. The argument would be valid if it was not merely an *important fact about* laws that they are the Will of the sovereign Creator, but if the word "law" *meant* this. But the ordinary word "law" does not mean this, as Dr. Runner surely knows. So I think the clue is to be found in the fact that he capitalizes "Law" and says, "*I mean* by Law . . ." In short, he is distinguishing between law and Law, though nowhere in his lectures does he tell us that this is what he is doing.<sup>2</sup> And in this passage he is arguing only that the pagan does not know the Law — which is to say, the pagan does not know that laws are the Will of the sovereign Creator. This interpretation is confirmed by the fact that immediately after the passage cited he attacks mistaken *conceptions* of law, arguing not that the pagan is mistaken about laws, but about the *conception* of law. So I think we must conclude that this passage neither establishes nor intends to establish the view that Aristotle did not

know anything.

Though it is quite possible that I have overlooked something, I have discovered only one other argument in these lectures which might be viewed as attempting to show that Aristotle did not know, among other things, the law of illicit conversion. At one point Dr. Runner gives a few examples to show that a person's "totality view" has a definite influence on his interpretation of various philosophic problems; and then he argues that philosophy and the special sciences, including logic, are not independent of each other. Or rather, he quotes a passage from Prof. Dooyeweerd in which this is argued: "It is impossible to establish a line of demarcation between philosophy and science in order to *emancipate the latter from the former* . . . . Scientific thought is constantly confronted with the temporal coherence of meaning among the modal aspects of reality, and cannot escape from following a transcendental Idea of this coherence . . . even the special sciences investigating . . . the arithmetical and the spatial, cannot avoid making philosophical presuppositions in this sense" (p. 126).

Now no one denies that a person's totality-view conditions his views on various philosophical problems. The hard question, though, is whether it also conditions his treatment of scientific problems. Dr. Runner cites no examples to show that it does; and I think some Christians would say that he *could* cite none, since according to them a person's faith conditions only his views on philosophical problems and not his views on scientific problems. They have argued, for instance, that Aristotle's logic is completely correct — logic is logic — even though his ultimate philosophy of logic is mistaken. I regard this question of the role of presuppositions in science as one of the most fundamental in this whole area; and I agree with Drs. Runner and Dooyeweerd that one's philosophical views may condition his scientific views. Unfortunately, at this absolutely crucial juncture Dr. Runner gives neither any examples nor any analyses; but examples can be found. The point is not that it is often hard, and sometimes even impossible, to untangle philosophical from scientific problems; but rather

that sometimes philosophical views lead a person either to reject certain supposed laws completely, or to insist on their reformulation. The Dutch mathematician-logician L. E. J. Brouwer, after adopting what is known as "intuitionism" in the philosophy of mathematics, proceeded to discard a great many "laws" of mathematics as not laws at all. And the German physicist Ernst Mach, after adopting a position in the philosophy of physics known as "phenomenalism," went on to reformulate a great many of the laws of classical physics.

But this does not show that Aristotle did not know any laws of logic. For to show this, one has to prove that a person's philosophical views condition his acceptance of *every* law in science; or in other words, that a disagreement on the philosophical interpretation of a particular science entails a disagreement on *every* law in that science. And not only have I by no means shown this, but I should be very much astounded if Dr. Runner would want to accept it. For I am sure that he accepts the law of illicit conversion, and accepts it pretty much as various non-Christian logicians have formulated it. In short, we are forced to conclude that what Dr. Runner wants to prove is just what his examples, plus the examples I have given above, *do* prove: Totality-views influence (some) philosophical views; and (some) philosophical views influence (some) scientific views. So this argument also does not establish, and was perhaps not intended to establish, the surprising thesis that Aristotle did not know the law of illicit conversion.

And indeed, there is direct evidence to show that, in spite of appearances, Dr. Runner does not believe this. He says, "How is it possible to be in [the situation of the pagan] and still show signs of being sufficiently in touch with reality to uncover, as scientists do, even important *moments* of truth (those fairly correct statements about limited states of affairs that constantly press upon us all?)" (p. 139) And in another passage he says, "I am constantly being asked, Isn't 2 plus 2 equal 4 a 'truth'? Isn't the fact that the combining of one chemical element with another produces uniformly a certain

2. But even on this interpretation I am completely at a loss to explain Dr. Runner's use of "law" and "Law" in this paragraph: "Now, in reality, such functioning is not identified with the law for that functioning. There has been a lot of confusion at this point. Physicists will speak of their mathematical formulae as laws. But these formulae, of course, are not the Law for physical functions; they are shorthand symbolical formulation of the regular subjective responses of uniformities the physicist observes in physical situations. We cannot observe the Law directly; we observe it indirectly through observation of the lawful responses of things to the Law-demand. What the Law itself is we know from the Word of God" (p. 127).

kind of chemical combination a 'truth'? To all such questions I reply that we must distinguish between a more or less correct description of those limited states of affairs that immediately press upon us all and the truth about those states of affairs. The *truth* of them cannot be seen in isolation from the whole coherence of meaning of the creation-order as seen in the light of God's Word . . . . Scripture tells us what the Truth is" (p. 111). Here, too, where he has precisely the right opportunity to do so, Dr. Runner does not deny that pagans correctly describe their experience. He merely says that they do not know the *truth of*, or the *truth about*, the truths they know. And though he doesn't explain what he means by this, one gathers quite readily from the context that it means they do not know that *God* has established these truths. Or, what would seem to be the equivalent of this, they do not know the Truth. So here Dr. Runner is distinguishing between Truth and truth, though again without saying so; and he is arguing that the pagan does not know the Truth.

To conclude this point: Dr. Runner is saying that Aristotle did not know the Law, though he may have known various laws, and that he did not know the Truth, though he may have known truth. And this I take to be not some astonishing and unusual view of which we have to be persuaded, but a very orthodox and traditional Protestant view on this matter, which certainly I, and I think most of us, wholeheartedly accept — though some of us might wish to state it in a rather different way.

NOW FOR THE other side of the coin: If one knows God's Word in all its implications, does he thereby know the law of illicit conversion? Or more loosely, is the Bible the source of all knowledge? There are passages in which Dr. Runner seems to say it is: "The Word of God . . . works in us a true knowledge of . . . the Law-order of God (the world-order)" (p. 100). And again, "We cannot observe the Law directly; we observe it indirectly through observation of the lawful responses of things to the Law-demand. What the Law itself is we know from the Word

of God" (127). Furthermore, he often seems to say that the Word of God is our only source of truth, illuminating every problem — that to deny this would be to impose on the Word of God a limitation in that there would then be some area in which it gives us no guidance (cf. p. 90).

But I have not been able to find any arguments which Dr. Runner gives for such an extreme view; and since he himself says various things which contradict it, I think we must interpret the cited passages differently. He says, for instance, "The important thing in this Conference is that you begin to see how the Word of God really directs us in our analysis of our experience. What the Word of God does not do, of course, is to tell us that there are fourteen or so aspects, law-spheres, ways (modes, modalities) in which that which is, is. For that is strictly a matter of analysis" (p. 122). And, to take only one example out of many, when he makes his distinction between the "subjective" and the "objective" he nowhere cites the Word of God. He simply appeals to our experience.

So in whatever sense Dr. Runner thinks we ought to develop a Christian science, he does not hold that this can be done by explicating or exegeting the Scriptures. The Word of God gives us the fundamental interpretation of reality; but it does not furnish us with a knowledge of all facts and laws. Rather, these are presumably to be discovered according to the techniques of the various sciences — by analyzing arguments, by performing experiments, by making observations. Then, since the pagan, too, can attain truth (not Truth), the Christian and the non-Christian can often accept each other's analyses and results and observations; a difference in commitment does not always mean a difference in the facts and laws which we accept. And this, too, I take to be a traditional and widely accepted Protestant view of the relation between the Scriptures and learning — one with which I find myself in full agreement.

I have this concern, however. If the Word of God does not direct our scientific research in the sense that one need only study it in order to do research, in what way then does it direct re-

search? I have always felt, after reading discussions on the relation between Scripture and learning, that this is one of the points on which I remained most in the dark. And on this point, too, Dr. Runner's lectures have let me down. It is comparatively easy to show the relevance of the Scriptures to the big philosophical issues. But we want to know in what sense the Scriptures direct research on *specific* and *limited* topics. For after all it is on such topics that the scientist spends most of his time; he does not, nor should he, spend all his time discussing ultimate problems. Even the philosopher, unless he have as metaphysical a temper as Dr. Runner seems to have, will often be concerned with specific questions of analysis. So the Christian logician analyzing arguments, the Christian physicist working in a laboratory, the Christian mathematician developing a proof — exactly how do the Scriptures direct *their* work? I find myself still in the dark here; yet their work must be done.

NOW TO DRAW together what I think Dr. Runner must be saying in these lectures, often with a good deal of rhetorical fervor: The Christian and the non-Christian have made opposing religious commitments. These commitments have ramifications and implications throughout philosophy and the sciences. At some points the difference in commitment will not show through — everyone, for instance, accepts the law of illicit conversion; at other points it will show through. And there is no neat way of separating these into two distinct areas. It is our task, then, always to dig out the implications of our faith, where these exist; and to oppose the manifestations of an opposing faith, where they exist.

One final point: If we are to oppose non-Christian commitments wherever they show themselves in the fields of learning, we will need a great deal of sensitivity and intelligence, plus a rich acquaintance both with God's Word and with the various sciences. But it seems to me that in his attacks on various philosophical views Dr. Runner often does not display these *versus* the mind-body distinction is that it was originally associated with an anti-Christian contrast between a high-

prerequisites.\* Apart from objections to specific arguments, I feel especially uneasy about two of his techniques. In the first place, in order to show that a certain philosophical view is anti-Christian he often inquires into the origin of the view and then shows that in its original form the view was anti-Christian. But surely this establishes only that the view in its original form was anti-Christian, not that it remained so. For instance, one of his arguments sell talk about the unity of the self, and Runner quotes a passage from Russell

\*It has come to my attention that some people have missed the intent of this sentence. As can be inferred from what follows, I certainly do not mean that Dr. Runner lacks all these prerequisites. I only mean that, in his attacks on other philosophers, he does not always show sufficient awareness of changes in philosophical concepts and terminology. (Footnote added in second printing — N.W.)

er and lower part in man.<sup>3</sup> But this doesn't show that every form of the mind-body distinction is mistaken, since there are many forms in which this contrast plays no part at all.

Secondly, Dr. Runner often seems to assume that when different philosophers use the same word for the concept they are trying to convey, they must also be using the same concept. Of course, he cannot really believe this, since he himself uses the Hegelian terms "thesis," "synthesis," and "antithesis," and would then himself stand condemned of the sin of "synthesis." But sometimes I find it impossible to interpret his *practice* in any other way. For instance, both Runner and Bertrand Russell in which he says that he is unable to

3. The other argument is this: The Bible teaches that man is a unity, and hence the mind-body distinction is mistaken.

discover wherein this unity lies. But anyone who checks will see that Russell and Runner are discussing quite different problems.<sup>4</sup> Similarly he attacks the doctrine of the *apriori*, a doctrine which he says both the Stoics and Descartes held. But there isn't any such thing as the doctrine of the *apriori*, only a number of different doctrines all bearing vague resemblances and going under the same name; and Dr. Runner's objection to the *apriori* seems to me not at all relevant to Descartes. Again, when Dr. Runner attacks the concept of Reason, and avers that Reason does not exist, he is attacking something which does not exist. There is no such thing as the concept of Reason.

4. The reference, though, should not be to page 51 of Russell's *Problems of Philosophy*, as the footnote says, but to page 80.

## Letters to the Journal

### Response to N. Wolterstorff, by H. E. Runner

The Editors of *The Reformed Journal*,

DEAR SIRS:

Allow me to record here my thanks for your generous offer of space in which to indicate some of my reactions to Dr. Wolterstorff's review of my Unionville lectures of 1959. Please note that what I have written is not a "reply," but only the recording of some of my reactions. A reply would be too long for your magazine.

My first reaction was not to "react" to the article at all in any public way. The reason for that was two sentences that appear near its close. They read as follows: "If we are to oppose non-Christian commitments wherever they show themselves in the fields of learning, we will need a great deal of sensitivity and intelligence, plus a rich acquaintance both with God's Word and with the various sciences. But it seems to me that in his attacks on various philosophical views Dr. Runner often does not display these prerequisites." That Dr. Wolterstorff's judgment does not have reference only to very limited matters can be seen from the remainder of his article. He continues: "Apart

from objections to specific arguments, I feel especially uneasy about two of his techniques"; his discussion of these shows that he is thinking of my *general treatment of the history of philosophy*.

Indeed, the tenor of the whole article suggests: 1) that this fellow Runner is of that "metaphysical" temper which does not descend to specific and limited questions of analysis and does not encourage this kind of work in students; 2) that he is concerned in the first place to show that certain philosophical views are anti-Christian and that, in order to do that, he often inquires into the origin of the view, shows that the view was anti-Christian in its original form, but then ignores later formulations of the view which are not anti-Christian (here again, a failure at genuine philosophical analysis and, as a result, a simplistic distortion of history); 3) that he "seems to assume that when different philosophers use the same word for the concept they are trying to convey, they must also be using the same concept."

What Dr. Wolterstorff's judgment of such a person might be I do not know, but I would myself certainly conclude

that anyone of whom these things can truthfully be said ought not to be teaching at Calvin or any other more or less respectable college. Perhaps then it is clear why my first reaction was not to reply to the article at all. I felt that as a former student of mine and as a junior colleague Dr. Wolterstorff might have refrained from casting his article in a way that tends to draw us away from a calm and dispassionate consideration of the momentous issues which his review amply shows are in debate.

Those issues, however, are what is at stake, and essentially the issue of the reality of a scripturally motivated philosophical and scientific enterprise. For that reason I thankfully accept the editors' hearty invitation to record some of my reactions. For I would be the last to hold that the form in which my lectures are written down displays the ultimate perfection of clarity. I do think they are sufficiently clear. I also think that many of the difficulties that some people will have in attempting to understand them will be due not merely to faulty writing but to the strangeness of unaccustomed ways of thinking. Hence, I welcome the opportunity for further clarification of my meaning. Permit me therefore to offer some of my reactions in numbered paragraphs.

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In the several schools of philosophy the analytical details of these views of the *apriori* were different. But that is not the deepest and most important thing to see. All of them served one (essentially religious) purpose: they are a substitute (born of the suppressing heart of apostate man) for the Word of God and His Law as the Guide of our life. In this respect there is *one* doctrine of the *apriori*, and my objection to it applies to the *lumen naturale* of Descartes just as much as to any other of its forms.

Dr. Wolterstorff's statement that there are "only a number of different doctrines all bearing vague resemblances and going under the same name" strikes me as having nominalistic overtones, and nominalism has always been a dangerous foe of Christianity. If one remains on the analytical plane he finds differences. But what is the *sense* of the emergence of this doctrine, though it be in many analytical forms? One escapes the nominalism when one discerns the one religious character at the depth-level of all these analytical variations. How else can a Christian read the history of fallen mankind? How else can he understand what it is to be man? So also the Kingdom of God is being built up in, under and with the events and historical developments of our daily life, in the hidden religious depth-dimension of our existence.

My reply to Dr. Wolterstorff's third point about Reason would be similar. I use the term 'Reason,' as I indicated in the lectures, not for the Greek view of the understanding, but for the modern view of the understanding *conceived as equipped with apriori ideas*. There are varying analytical concepts in modern thinkers with respect to this Reason, but at the religious depth-level they all possess a commonness that is real: they are all substitutes for the 'heart' of Scripture that is directed by the Word of God. There is no place to develop this further now.

I conclude that the evidence for Dr. Wolterstorff's main thesis in this section lacks all validity. As in the ma-

terial discussed under the second numbered paragraph, so here his inability to understand my argument is due to his failure to penetrate beyond the "surface" modal level of analysis to the religious depth-level of the heart. That is the error of the whole history of intellectualism, whether in Roman Catholic Thomistic philosophy or in all the varieties of Protestant scholasticism. This one-sided and shallow intellectualism is giving rise in our contemporary world to a mighty reactionary surge of irrationalism (e.g. existentialism). It is therefore advised that Christians abandon all one-sidednesses by living consciously in the full light of scriptural revelation. To that end we must all pray for daily sanctification.

(4) Dr. Wolterstorff shows himself to be highly confused about my use of the words 'law' and 'Law,' 'truth' and 'Truth.' Much of the article is an attempt on his part to show what it is I must mean. His long footnote citing me indicates that my use of the words remains mysterious to him. The conclusion he comes to about what I must mean I myself do not recognize as my thought on the subject. He has read my words having in mind *his* understanding of what the problem is. In this way what I said comes to be translated — rather, forced — into something his way of thinking can allow. But this is no way to read the work of others.

His entire discussion of this important point is vitiated by his unfortunate choice of an example of a law. He wants, he tells us, to be "concrete" and specific. [This is probably an illustration of what it is *not* to be of a metaphysical temper, to be concerned with limited and specific areas of analysis. The trouble is, he gets off to a bad start because of a failure of analysis, a failure that is ultimately, I believe, due to his abstraction of analysis from a synoptic picture of *where* he is when he begins his analysis. Analysis always presupposes some more synoptic or integral awareness.] He suggests that we "pick a particular law from a particular science, and deal with it." Any law, he says, will do, "but let's pick one from logic." Here Dr. Wolterstorff proceeds to talk about the conversion of (many) universal affirmative (A)

propositions and what he calls the fallacy of illicit conversion. He calls this one of the laws of logic, and says that if he is not mistaken it was the pagan Greek philosopher Aristotle who first formulated this law, and that he is not aware that anyone has ever disputed it. His intention is to show that apostate man can know the 'truth' about some laws, and out of this comes his misinterpretation of my meaning.

There is loose language in this section of Dr. Wolterstorff's argument: he speaks of a fallacy and then remarks that Aristotle first formulated this law. Undoubtedly, he means to say that it is a law that A propositions be converted by limitation, that is, that an A converts to an I. However, Dr. Wolterstorff has made it just a trifle too easy for himself. His basic error is that he calls a law what is only a *rule* for the practicing logician. When in doing logic I must or wish to convert an A proposition I am confronted with a rule which describes how I am to do this: the predicate term of the A being undistributed must, when it is transferred to the subject position, be preceded by the word 'some.' This is not a logical law, but a rule for logical practice. The law for our logical or analytical 'life' however is operative in this rule. In this logical law there are a number of 'principia,' and the one that requires us in practice to set up this rule about conversion is the *principium identitatis indiscernibilium* (principle of the identity of indiscernibles). This law requires that the subject term of the converse be identical with the predicate term of the convertend. The rule is a practical guide to our keeping the law. But — and this is the important difference — there is no large agreement among logicians as to the meaning or significance of this law. Think only of the dispute about its meaning that exists between proponents and opponents of a mathematical logic. When we deal with a logical law, and not just an operational rule, the 'knowledge' that pagans possess is not so obvious!

From his confusion of rule and law — the confusion would be abetted by a subjectivistic bent of mind — Dr. Wolterstorff draws conclusions about what I can possibly mean by 'law' and

'Law,' 'truth' and 'Truth' and our knowledge of these. He writes: "Dr. Runner is saying that Aristotle did not know the Law, though he may have known various laws, and that he did not know the Truth, though he may have known truth." From other sentences in his article it is clear that Dr. Wolterstorff concludes that I mean that while pagans know truths they do not know the *truth about* the truths they know, viz. that God has established these truths.

This whole way of putting the matter is alien to my way of thinking and a failure to grasp my central point about

the *intrinsic* connection between the Word of God and learning. Fundamentally, Dr. Wolterstorff thinks of our knowledge as propositional. He therefore interprets me to be saying that the pagans know some propositions (truths) but not others (truth about these truths, e.g. that God has established them). I do not see how he can avoid the view that Scripture simply adds certain propositions to others we already know without its aid. This, in my estimation, is to fall back to a rejection of any *intrinsic* connection between the Word of God and our learning. The same attitude is to be seen in

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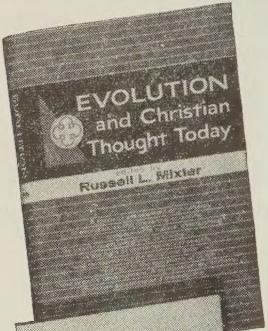
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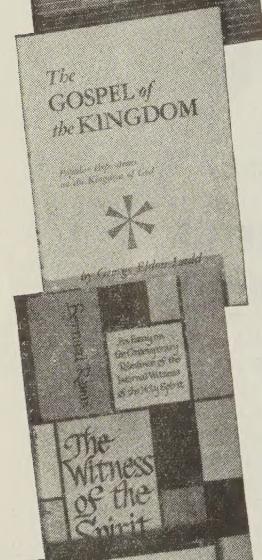
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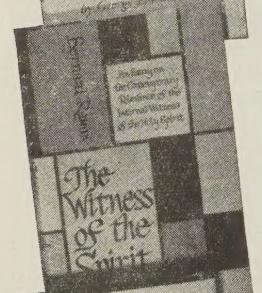
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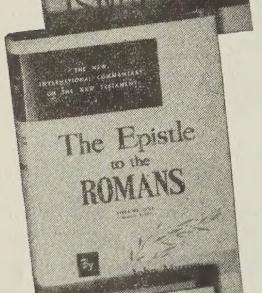
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the letter of Mr. Wiers in the November issue of the *Journal*. I think this attitude destructive of the insights of the original Protestant Reformation.

In my opinion we cannot embrace the view that 'knowledge' is only propositional. I believe, for example, that the old association psychology was wrong in thinking that our knowledge is built up from certain original atomic units or elements. I think the Gestalt psychology is on the right track in supposing that we are first aware of a 'whole' and not of 'elements.' But we must not interpret that 'whole' as a purely perceptual field. Prof. Dooyeweerd's view about 'de naieve ervaring' (immediate experience) is most significant here. I believe that in the depth of our religious hearts we discern the general structure and meaning of the world (if God's Word has enlightened our hearts), and that there the religious suppression takes place. I believe that analysis articulates what we 'see' or refuse to see in our hearts. Thus, I believe that the Truth (central religious awareness) influences our insight into the states of affairs we experience. Why does a body of 'facts' suddenly look different to us? That is, what is meant by 'fact'?

\* \* \* \*

There is much more that I would like to say on these subjects. But this is neither the time nor the place. Permit me to conclude by saying that the best corrective of Dr. Wolterstorff's analysis would be, I think, to read the lectures themselves. It may also be that these 'reactions' of mine will help the reader to understand them better. If so, he has the editors of *The Reformed Journal* to thank.

H. E. RUNNER

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